

# VA Health Care Program

## Benefits and Enrollment

### UNIFORM BENEFITS PACKAGE



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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QUALITY CARE

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PREVENTIVE CARE

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PRIMARY CARE

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CHOICE OF PRIMARY CARE LOCATION

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Department of Veterans Affairs

## *Keep Your Current Coverage*

VA encourages you to retain any current health care coverage you may already have. Veterans with private health insurance or with federally funded insurance [Department of Defense (DoD), Medicare or Medicaid] may choose to use these sources of health care coverage as a supplement to their VA coverage.

It is important to remember that VA health care depends primarily on Congressional appropriations. Enrolled veterans do not pay premiums, however some have co-payments.





## THE UNIFORM BENEFITS PACKAGE

In October 1996, Congress passed what became Public Law 104-262, the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996. The law paved the way for the creation of a Uniform Benefits Package – a standard enhanced health benefits plan available to all enrolled veterans. The law also simplified the process by which veterans can receive the services.

Public Law 104-262 simplified the rules for providing health care to veterans and introduced improvements in the quality and timeliness of the care you receive. Like other standard health care plans, VA's Uniform Benefits Package emphasizes preventive and primary care, offering a full range of outpatient and inpatient services.

VA has also placed a priority on improved veteran satisfaction. Our goal is to ensure the quality of care and service you receive is consistently excellent, in every location, in every program.

We've begun by making it easier for you to get the health care you need. We've added more than 350 new locations of care to the VA health care system – bringing the total to 1,300 nationwide. You select the primary care location that's most convenient for you.

To receive health care under the Uniform Benefits Package, most veterans must first be enrolled. You can apply for enrollment at any VA health care facility, veterans' benefits office, or via the Internet.

*Under the Uniform Benefits Package, VA offers you, the veteran, a comprehensive health care plan that provides the care you need.*



# *Enroll Today*

## **to receive care**

Veterans can apply for VA health care enrollment by completing VA Form 10-10 EZ. The 10-10 EZ may be obtained by visiting, calling or writing any VA health care facility or veterans' benefits office. You can also call toll-free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or access the form on the Internet at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). (Click on on-line applications.)

You can submit a completed form in person or by mail. Please be sure to sign your application form, otherwise it cannot be processed for enrollment. VA Form 10-10 EZ is a one-page application form, front and back. Most veterans are able to complete the form in less than 15 minutes.

### *The Process is Simple - Apply at Any Time*

Veterans can apply for enrollment at any VA health care facility or veterans' benefits office. After you have answered a few questions, VA staff will assign you to an initial priority group. Your application will be processed and VA will send you a letter concerning your enrollment.

If you are a new VA patient, your application for enrollment will be generated automatically as part of your patient registration process the first time you visit a VA health care facility.

If you are currently receiving care or have received care from VA at any time during the last year, your application for enrollment may have been automatically processed. You may want to check with your local VA health care facility if you are uncertain of your enrollment status.

### *Enrollments are Renewed Annually*

Once enrolled, you will normally remain enrolled for one year. Your enrollment will be reviewed and renewed annually, depending on your priority group and available VA resources.

### *Exceptions to the Enrollment Requirement*

There are some exceptions to the enrollment requirement...but all veterans are encouraged to enroll.

You are not required to apply for enrollment if you fall into one of the following categories:

- VA has rated you with a service-connected disability of 50% or more.
- Less than one year has passed since you were discharged from military service for a disability that the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but that VA has not yet rated.
- You are seeking care from VA only for a service-connected disability.

Even if you fall into one of these categories, VA encourages you to enroll. Your enrollment will help VA better plan its delivery of quality care to all veterans. This will allow us to meet your health care needs more effectively in the future, and will also assist us in providing you with better preventive and primary health care.

*Enrolled veterans may be eligible for services not included in the Uniform Benefits Package*



# *Medical Services*

## under the Uniform Benefits Package

Enrollment means you are eligible for a comprehensive Uniform Benefits Package of outpatient and inpatient services that includes:

- Preventive services, including immunizations, screening tests, and health education and training classes
- Primary health care
- Diagnosis and treatment
- Surgery, including outpatient surgery
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Home health care
- Respite, hospice care and palliative care
- Urgent and limited emergency care services in VA facilities
- Drugs and pharmaceuticals
- Medications are covered by the program as long as they have been prescribed by a physician employed by or under contract with VA. Some veterans will be required to make a co-payment for prescriptions.

### *Restrictions for Hearing Aids and Eyeglasses*

Hearing aids and eyeglasses generally require a service-connected disability rating of 10% or more. They are usually not provided to nonservice-connected veterans for generally occurring hearing or vision loss. Additional information is available at your local VA health care facility.

### *Exclusions*

Some health care services that are not normally covered by the Uniform Benefits Package include abortion, membership in health clubs or spas for rehabilitation, special private duty nursing and gender alteration.

Drugs and medical devices not approved by the Food and Drug Administration are not covered, except under special circumstances.

If you are an enrolled veteran, you may be eligible for some services that are not part of the Uniform Benefits Package. These services were not changed by the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 – you must still qualify for them on a case-by-case basis and special restrictions apply to each.

The services include:

- Limited nursing home care
- Limited domiciliary care
- Limited non-VA hospitalization or health care services for veterans with special eligibility
- Limited dental care
- Readjustment counseling
- Adult day health care
- Homeless programs
- Sexual trauma counseling





# *Receive Care*

## **throughout the VA health care system**

Enrollment in the VA health care system means you receive comprehensive health care services for the care medically indicated, when and where you need it. In other words, once you are enrolled, you may receive care at any VA location - without repeating the application process during the enrollment period.

### *Choose the VA Facility That's Best for You*

Once you are enrolled, you may select a “preferred facility” for receiving primary care. A preferred facility is any VA location of care - for example, a VA Medical Center or Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - that you identify as the facility at which you wish your primary care to be delivered.

If for any reason a selected facility is unable to provide the health care needed by an enrolled veteran, that facility will make arrangements for referral to another VA facility - or with one of VA's private sector affiliates - to provide the required care.

### *Your Benefits Travel with You*

Veterans receive a comprehensive health care package that is completely portable across the entire VA system. This means that when you travel or spend a portion of each year in a different location, care is always close by.

*A comprehensive health care package  
that is completely portable*



# What is your *Priority Group*?

Seven priority groups have been established to help ensure that VA resources are allocated to veterans with the highest priority for VA care.

Priority level funding may change from year to year, depending on Congressional appropriations. If VA cannot renew your enrollment for the following year, you will be notified 60 days before your current enrollment period expires.

## PRIORITY

**1**

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more

## PRIORITY

**2**

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40%

## PRIORITY

**3**

- Veterans who are former POWs
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20%
- Veterans discharged from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans who received the Purple Heart
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under 38 U.S.C., Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

## PRIORITY

**4**

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

## PRIORITY

**5**

- Nonservice-connected veterans and noncompensable service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled, whose annual income and net worth are below the established dollar thresholds

## PRIORITY

**6**

- All other eligible veterans who are not required to make co-payments for their care, including:
  - World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
  - Veterans seeking care solely for disorders associated with: exposure to herbicides while serving in Vietnam; or exposure to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; or for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War; or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998
  - Compensable 0% service-connected veterans

## PRIORITY

**7**

- Nonservice-connected veterans and noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans with income and net worth above the established dollar thresholds and who agree to pay specified co-payments



Department of Veterans Affairs

For more information on the Uniform Benefits Package,  
priority groups or the application process, call toll-free

**1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387)**

or access information on the Internet at

**[www.va.gov/health/elig](http://www.va.gov/health/elig)**